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SUBJECT: PRODUCTIVE U.S.-BRAZIL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIALOGUE,
BRASILIA, OCTOBER 30-31.

REF: A) BRASILIA 1406, B) BRASILIA 1523

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¶11. (U) THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED AND NOT FOR
INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶12. (SBU) SUMMARY. On October 30-31, representatives of the USG scientific and technological community met with Brazilian counterparts in Brasilia. The Brasilia meeting was generally viewed as very productive where both delegations were able to identify areas of potential cooperation between the United States and Brazil.

The two delegations discussed a wide range of topics, including earth sciences, remote sensing, agricultural research, basic science, and science policies. Also, the two sides discussed innovation as an emerging area of cooperation that shows great potential. The dialogue helps prepare the way for a high-level U.S.-Brazil Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology (JCM), which they agreed should take place in Washington in the first half of 2009. The two delegations agreed, among other things, to include a recommendation to the JCM in 2009 to create working groups on innovation, nanotechnology, and science education. END SUMMARY.

THE MEETING

¶13. (SBU) The Preparatory Meeting for the Second Brazil-United States Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology was held at the Ministry of External Relations (MRE) in Brasilia on October 30-31, 2008. USG agencies that participated in the meeting included the State Department, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Agriculture Research Service, the U.S. Army's Science and Technology Office, and the U.S. Southern Command. The 60-plus Brazilian delegation included representatives from the Ministry of External Relations, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Ministry of Development, Industry and External Commerce, the National Technology Institute (INT), the Brazilian Mineral Resources Company (CPRM), the National Meteorology Institute (INMET), the National Council for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (CNPq), the National Institute on Space Research (INPE), the Brazilian Agency for Industrial Development (ABDI), the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), the Aerospace Technical Center (CTA), IBAMA (the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources) and universities.

¶14. (SBU) The meeting began with a plenary session, which featured a

formal welcoming by Minister Hadil Vianna, the MRE's Director of Science and Technology, and Lisa Kubiske, the Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Brasilia. Vianna stressed that Brazil is no longer a passive recipient of scientific and technological aid. Rather, he stressed, Brazil is now able to participate as an equal partner in scientific endeavors, contributing its own financial and human resources to these partnerships. Kubiske emphasized the strength of existing cooperation and the importance that the current administration places on cooperative science and technology endeavors. She also noted that President-elect Obama cited this as an area of great importance.

¶ 15. (SBU) The plenary also included updates about the recent meeting of the Working Group on Public Health, which had been held earlier in Washington on October 6-7, 2008, and a brief presentation about the state of cooperation between Brazil and the U.S. in the energy sector.

¶ 16. (SBU) Following the plenary session, the delegates split into six subgroups to discuss the following areas: policies on science, technology and innovation; biodiversity, climate and disaster detection; earth and water sciences; remote sensing; space; aeronautics; agricultural research; capacity building; promoting science education; coordination of financing of basic science involving U.S. and Brazilian scientists; and research on and monitoring of infectious and vector-transmitted diseases, as well as possible ways to engage in biological safety and security cooperation. The reports generated by each group will be presented in the annex of the meeting summary signed by the heads of the two delegations.

¶ 17. (SBU) At the end of the meeting, the two delegations held a closing plenary session to review each subgroup's report. During this session the heads of the two delegations signed a statement about the progress made during the meeting. The joint statement

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also suggested the creation of three new working groups under the Joint Commission framework. These groups would focus on Innovation; Nanotechnology; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education and Public Awareness of Science.

HIGHLIGHTS

¶ 18. (SBU) Highlights include an expansion of the scope and depth of cooperation between the U.S. Agricultural Research Service and EMBRAPA; the Brazilian Air Force's expression of desire to work with the United States in the area of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and their continued commitment to space cooperation; the beginning of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiations between the USGS and a Brazilian university (UNIOESTE); and identification of new areas of potential cooperation between NOAA and its Brazilian counterparts. Participants also cited specific progress being made in the area of remote earth sensing and mineral resource assessments.

¶ 19. (SBU) An unexpected positive outcome of the meeting was a desired expressed by the Ministry of Science and Technology to create a formal cooperation agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense. A Ministry of Science and Technology representative discussed this on the margins of the meeting with Science Counselor. Post will work with the Ministry and the Department of Defense to facilitate communications between them and to help them in defining and shaping this relationship.

INNOVATION

¶ 10. (SBU) Both delegations supported the creation of a working group on innovation because they felt that innovation should be dealt with under the umbrella of the U.S.-Brazil JCM. This sentiment was seconded by the Economic Partnership Dialog (EPD), which met on the same day (see REFTEL B for more information on the

EPD.) The heads of both the U.S. and the Brazilian delegations to the JCM joined the EPD delegations for a lunchtime discussion on innovation. The keynote speech during this lunch was given by the U.S. delegation leader, Bruce Howard, State Department's Director of the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation. All present felt that innovation would play a key role in the future of both U.S.-Brazil technical and economic cooperation and that it should be addressed under the umbrella of science and technology cooperation.

CHALLENGES

¶11. (SBU) While most groups were able to identify several areas in which they would like to increase scientific and technological cooperation, there were some areas in which the delegations were not able to come to agreement. The U.S. delegates to the Biological Sciences subgroup were met with considerable resistance to their offer of funding and partnerships to support capacity building projects related to research and monitoring of tropical and infectious diseases. The Brazilian delegation, particularly the Ministry of Health, felt that this would better be characterized as a discussion on biosafety and biosecurity, which should involve a wider array of Brazilian agencies. Despite this resistance, the Ministry of Health and Defense eventually expressed an interest in receiving more information and informed the U.S. delegates that the Brazilians would be convening an inter-ministerial group to discuss these issues.

¶12. (SBU) Post will continue to work with its contacts to find potential partners for the USG in these endeavors. Post will also try to gather more information on this new inter-ministerial working group. We expect to continue the conversation with the Brazilians on the possibility of cooperation in the areas of biosafety and biosecurity, which could lead to inclusion at the ministerial-level JCM in spring 2009.

¶13. (SBU) The Earth Sciences group also encountered some areas of disagreement. A representative from the Brazilian Geological Survey (CPRM) pressed the USGS representative on several occasions to expand the nature of on-going cooperative programs to include a couple of specific areas of interest to the Brazilian agency. While USGS may be willing to include one of these new areas, there were a couple of others that the agency is not prepared to deal with at this time.

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UNREPRESENTED WORKING GROUPS

¶14. (SBU) Several USG agencies that are involved in science and technology cooperation were not able to attend this preparatory meeting. These agencies include, among others, the Department of Health and Human Services and its agencies, the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, and the Energy Department and its agencies. As a result of their absence, several topics such as bioinformatics, measurement standards and technology, information and computer technology, energy, nanotechnology and public health were not discussed at this meeting. However, the Working Group on Public Health had met earlier in October and the agenda and minutes from this meeting were discussed during the plenary session. Post will work with the appropriate USG and Brazilian agencies to facilitate video conferences or meetings on the margins of other international gatherings as a way of helping interested agencies to discuss the outstanding topics and complete their preparatory work before the ministerial-level JCM in Spring of 2009.

COMMENT

¶15. (SBU) COMMENT. This science and technology meeting was a productive tool to signal USG interest in continued scientific and technological cooperation with Brazil. The Brazilians have been

actively participating in similar meetings with European and other governments, demonstrating their keen interest in expanding scientific and technological efforts on the international stage. Post feels that it is critical for the USG to continue to show our interest in working with Brazil as an influential South American country, because the USG benefits greatly from the outcomes of this type of cooperation. Additionally, this cooperation is yet another way that the USG can deepen its relationship with Brazil and underscore its commitment to working with this critical partner in the region. END COMMENT.

SOBEL